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# Mongol Past and Manchu Present: History and Ethnicity in Wei Yuan's Thought

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Oral Presentation O2.3

**MONGOL PAST AND MANCHU PRESENT:  
HISTORY AND ETHNICITY IN WEI YUAN'S THOUGHT**

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As an important early figure in the intellectual history of late Qing China, Wei Yuan has widely been understood as an introducer of Western learning to China. He is also remembered among scholars as a key figure in the late Qing Neo-Text classicist movement, which was closely related with his political ideals. However, a major aspect of Wei Yuan's thought has been neglected in previous scholarly studies: no study of Wei Yuan, either in English or in Chinese, has ever studied his role as a historian. Why did Wei Yuan, himself a Han Chinese, compile two huge series of the histories of the Mongol (Yuan) and Manchu (Qing) dynasties? How did he conceptualize the relationship between history writing and his political ideal? This research project is going to examine Wei Yuan's historiography (with special attention on ethnicity) and his influence on the intellectual history of late Qing China.